

C-II DOCS

JFK - Thompson, Butcher ; Kuznetsov, DeLongrim

Jan 9 ^{63?} (Butcher draft)

... Puro said he thought Kuz. drew from his talks with McCloy & Stevenson of the particular sensitivity in the US to anything involving Cuba. This is a delicate nerve in the US stretching back to the beginning of our country. On the other hand, the Puro was anxious to maintain good relations with the SC. He had noted before that these two most powerful countries had no national interests that brought them into collision. The Puro had spent a good deal of time defending this viewpoint prior to the Cuban crisis. Now that the matter had quieted down he saw no reason why the US & the USSR should be involved again in the same way. He asked Kuz. to explain to his principals American sensitivity to over Cuba. The fact that there are 15 to 17,000 Sov troops still in Cuba causes difficulties for the US Gov and for those in the US who seek to maintain good relations with the USSR.

pressures, wants]

Pres said the Sov Gov could understand how the US felt about this if they could imagine a similar situation in Finland. He was hopeful that Sov policies toward Cuba, including the personnel & amounts there, would lead to a further relaxation of the situation. As the question of the Bay of Pigs prisoners [K. had complained about ^{Orange had} speech] the Pres said he had put them on the beach and he felt responsible for them. He had not said in his address to them that the US would invade Cuba, though he had expressed the hope for a change in the situation there. ...

If the SC can comprehend the sensitivity and difficult nature of the problems the US faces in the Caribbean, this can lead to a solution of other problems.

... Referring to the Pres' comparison of the Cuban situation with Finland, Key noted that there were many US military bases, armed with deadly weapons, and occupied

by troops, around the USSR. However, he had no
instructions on this point and said that the USSR was
not raising the question at this time.

Pres implied that the US had not introduced a new
major base in any country such as Finland. A Thurso
base there would have created a new situation. He
repeated that Cuba was a matter of great sensitivity to
the American people and again asked Key to
communicate this to this Government. Good relations between
our two countries will be made easier if the Sov Gov
understands this.

[Did K not? Did Pres think K did not? Did
K possibly focus on location of Cuba and not on
its symbolic signif. for US?]

Rusk - Delvingin Feb 9, 63

(Law troops)

... See went on to say that the Pres has a serious problem over Cuba. Last August and September he had tried to calm down the American people on this issue. However, the events of the Sept. + Oct were not only serious in themselves but had reduced the President's credibility in the eyes of his own people. Now, it was not so easy for the Pres. to reassure the country over Cuba. The American people remember what Senator Keston had said last August and what the Pres had said and Keston's speculation had turned out to be correct. This situation makes it very difficult for the Pres to calm the atmosphere in the US. We hope, therefore, that steps will be taken in Cuba to make it clear that Cuba is not being prepared as a base for adventure in the rest of the hemisphere. We do not agree that a low military ~~base~~ presence in this hemisphere is a normal situation. The Cuban question is clearly poisoning US-Sov relations and we strongly urge the Sov Gov to do what it can to reduce this complication.